

ARIMANT and TAMIRA:

A N

EASTERN TALE.

In the Manner of DRYDEN's FABLES.

By a GENTLEMAN of Cambridge.

----- ad aras

Deducta est; non, ut, solenni more sacrorum

Perfecto, posset claro comitari Hymenæo,

Sed casta incestè nubendi tempore in ipso

Hostia conciderit mactatu mæsta parentis —

LUCRET. Lib. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for CHARLES MARSH, at Cicero's Head, in Round Court
in the Strand : and sold by M. Cooper in Pater-noster-row.

MDCCVII.

Price One Shilling.

W. A. ...

ARRIVED AT THE

IN THE MANNER OF DRYDEN. TABLES

RECEIVED 10 JANUARY 1945

Product of, non, at, least with American

1891

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

[Faint, illegible markings]

1900

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14. 11. 1917.  14. 11. 1917.





ARIMANT and TAMIRA:

EASTERN TALE.

WHERE rich *Golconda* flames with mines of gold,
There liv'd, as authors tell, in days of old,
A prince of noble birth, and mighty fame,
Brave, wise, and good; *Yamodin* was his name,
5 Thro' all the *East*, o'er *Asia's* wide domain,
Like him no monarch knew the art to reign.
If to the field his valiant troops he led,
Before his arm united nations fled;

- And when fair peace return'd ('twas peace he lov'd)
 10 His just decrees all sought, for all approv'd.
 So gen'rous was this prince ; his court so free
 To ev'ry country, worship, or degree ;
 So splendid was his train ; so deck'd his board
 With all that earth, or air, or seas afford ;
 15 That distant nations join'd with one consent
 To style *Yamodin*, the Magnificent.

- Twelve years were over, since his lovely bride
 Was snatch'd untimely from this monarch's side.
 Of all his num'rous race, so fate ordain'd,
 20 To fill *Golconda's* throne no son remain'd.
 One only daughter heav'n vouchsaf'd to spare,
 One only daughter was his darling care.
 In her the father oft would weep to trace
 The living features of a dearer face ;
 25 In her would gaze on his lost consort's charms,
 And clasp the faithful image in his arms.

Nor

Nor vain his love; 'twas ever her employ
 To sooth each care, and add to ev'ry joy:
 For well she knew what filial ties require,
 30 And lov'd, and honour'd her indulgent fire.

This nymph of whom I speak, this gentle maid,
 (Whose charms should ne'er decay, nor virtues fade,
 If ought my humble verse might raise to fame,)
 Was call'd TAMIRA from her mother's name.

35 In modest mien, in dignity of air,
 Where was the virgin could with her compare;
 In whom at once were join'd whate'er can please
 Of grace, of motion, elegance, and ease

Fair as she was, and born to grace a throne,
 40 Soon was her fame to neighb'ring nations known,
 From neighb'ring nations rival princes strove
 To win TAMIRA'S heart, and gain her love.
 As each excell'd in fortune, arms, address,
 Some woo'd with bribes, and some with gentleness:

Some

45 Some told her tales of battles lost and won,
 And bloody fields on t'other side the sun.
 From rich *Indostan* wealthy monarchs came,
 And kings of *Visapour*, a mighty name,
 But good *Yamodin* soon compos'd the strife,
 50 And vow'd no stranger e'er should call her wife;
 Left fam'd *Golconda*, once of high renown,
 Should shine a jewel in some foreign crown.

And yet, what broils would vex *TAMIRA's* reign,
 Should she a queen still unespous'd remain?
 55 Some haughty prince, she once refus'd to wed,
 Might drag her captive to her conqu'ror's bed.
 Or grant the Gods her happy days might bless
 In peace with justice, and in arms, success;
 What hand, when she's no more, the state shall sway?
 60 What chief the headlong populace obey?
 Perhaps, while rival lords aspire to reign,
 Th' unpeopled land may weep her children slain:

Or

Or some proud *Raja* lead up all his powers,

And level with the dust *Golconda's* lofty towers.

65 What then remain'd but soon to match the fair,

And from her father's court adopt an heir ?

Some youth, whose arm the sinking realm might save ;

And who so fit, as ARIMANT the brave ?

To powerful kings was ARIMANT allied,

70 And, next their monarch, was the people's pride.

Oft from his eye the tear of pity stole,

For soft his heart, tho' dauntless was his soul.

Oft had he check'd his arm the foe to spare,

And wept when victor at the chance of war.

75 Long had this youth conceal'd the pleasing pain,

Long fair TAMIRA lov'd, but lov'd in vain :

For tho' TAMIRA burnt with equal fire,

Yet still she dreaded, as she lov'd her fire.

Think then what joy their tender souls possess,

80 When the king spoke the purpose of his breast !

What

What scenes of rapture open'd to their view!
 So like a dream, they scarce believ'd them true.
 No less his transport, that his choice approv'd
 The man, whom best of all his daughter lov'd.
 85 Fixt for their nuptials was the happy day,
 For life's uncertain pleasures soon decay,
 And blis that woos our hand 'tis madness to delay.
 O happy pair! for you thro' all the court
 'Tis feasting, dancing, jollity and sport!
 90 But ah! the short-liv'd joys shall soon be o'er,
 And mirth's wild revelry be heard no more!
 Forth from the sickly *South's* contagious breath
 Comes the dire Pestilence, and scatters death:
 She stands, and throws her deadly poisons round,
 95 With stride gigantic cov'ring all the ground.
 Vain is the voice of grief: in vain the cries
 Of widows, mothers, orphans pierce the skies.

Ten nights in vain the watchful *Bramin* prays,

In vain observes the sun ten tedious days.

100 What, tho' whole weeks with still-uplifted hands

Each sad *Faquir* in painful suppliance stands ;

What, tho' to hallow'd groves the faint retires,

And in his bosom clasps the sacred fires ;

A stronger poison breathes th' infected air,

105 And mighty *RAM* disdains his vot'ry's pray'r.

What ransom then can angry heav'n demand

To stay these ills, and save a guilty land ?

Oft could the blood of *royal virgins* spare

Their lives in famine, and their troops in war ;

110 Who knows but now, th' offended Gods require

Some *royal virgin* should again expire ?

Swift thro' the crowd the voice of transport flies,

' A *royal virgin*, ev'ry tongue replies ;

' The sacred rites prepare ; a *royal virgin* dies.'

B

Soon

115 Soon the sad tidings reach'd *Yamodin's* ear ;

'Twas what *Yamodin* long had learnt to fear.

What shall he do? No *virgin* but his own

Can boast alliance to *Golconda's* throne.

She, only she, the nation's pangs can ease ;

120 She, only she, th' offended Gods appease.

Speechless he stood : at length recov'ring said,

(And check'd a tear he seem'd asham'd to shed,)

' What had I done, that I was doom'd to reign,

' Curs'd to this sad pre-eminence of pain ?

125 ' How blest the slave, who plac'd beneath a crown,

' Shrinks at my nod, and trembles at my frown !

' He undisturb'd, his infant babes can see

' Smile in his face, or wanton on his knee :

' He sits secure, and calls them all his own----

130 ' Their blood a people's guilt can ne'er atone.

' But I---O royalty, is this thy fate !

' Is this, O mighty king, thy envied state ?

' At

- ‘ At once to my distracted soul appears
‘ The fond remembrance of long blissful years
135 ‘ Can I forget how to these arms she flew,
‘ And told me ev’ry idle tale she knew?
‘ For yet a child, with each affection free,
‘ Her little love was lavish’d all on me.
‘ Duty matur’d what nature taught before,
140 ‘ And growing years increas’d her fondness more.
‘ Hence, when in arms I fought the dubious fight,
‘ Long days she wept, and many a painful night:
‘ Oh, no! she shall not bleed----but can I hear
‘ A nation’s groans still trembling on my ear?
145 ‘ Shall I, with tyrants rank’d, the public scorn,
‘ My name a curse to ages yet unborn?----
‘ No; she must die.----“ O thou, at whose command
“ *Golconda* weeps,--O save a sinking land!
“ Accept that life, for which her country calls,
150 “ TAMIRA’s life--’tis thine--to thee she falls.”

The vow is past, when lo! the nymph appears;
 Nor wild complaint she pours, nor silent tears:
 But calm content, mild joy, and heav'nly grace
 Shed their sweet radiance o'er her lovely face.

155 At the sad sight again the parent's breast
 Each tender thought with tenfold force possess'd:
 All fear of injur'd heav'n his soul forfook;
 And, ' *No; thou shalt not die;* ' was all he spoke.

' And could'st thou see me live,' TAMIRA said,
 160 ' With all a nation's curses on my head?
 ' Of me shall ev'ry orphan ask a fire?
 ' Of me each mother a lost son require?
 ' Of me shall ev'ry wife her lord implore?
 ' Die, die, TAMIRA; lord, fire, son, restore.

165 ' Yes, yes, I go to heal a nation's wound;
 ' A grateful nation shall my praise resound:
 ' The decent matron, each revolving year,
 ' Shall o'er my ashes shed a pious tear.

' The

- ' The *Bramins* too, as feastful days return,
 170 ' Shall hang the golden tissue on mine urn;
 ' On which with curious skill some artist draws
 ' A princess bleeding in her country's cause.
 ' Calm and undaunted to those realms I go,
 ' Where virtuous souls a happier mansion know;
 175 ' Thence soon, if ought of truth our sages say,
 ' Burst forth triumphant and return to day!
 ' Then be it so; and thus;' the monarch said,
 ' Thus to grim fate I doom thy guiltless head.
 ' Thou heard'st, my child, a parent's voice before,
 180 ' Now hear thy prince; the parent is no more.
 ' *Prepare; to-morrow, virgin, is the day*
 ' *When thou to heav'n thy forfeit life must pay:*
 ' *Virgin, prepare; myself the rites will speed,*
 ' *Conduct the pomp, and see the victim bleed.*
 185 Then round her bending neck his arms he threw,
 Embrac'd her thrice, and thrice pronounc'd, adieu.

And

And think'st thou then, deluded king, 'tis thine
 With rites like these to consecrate the shrine?
 Think'st thou those gods thou styl'st the great and good
 190 Drink the fair virgin's unpolluted blood?
 Unhappy fire! in errors, darkness nurs'd,
 Wicked thro' piety, thro' virtue curs'd!
 O check thy hand; nor such rich incense pour
 To that vain idol, whom thy fears adore.
 195 Where now is ARIMANT? what art can save
 His fond, his lov'd TAMIRA from the grave?
 All wild, and frantick to the crowd he flies;
 Still the mad crowd, *a royal victim*, cries:
 Thence, reckless where he went, in mere despair
 200 He fought the court, for all he lov'd was there.
 He found TAMIRA with extatic eyes,
 And hands erect, commercing with the skies.
 Her soul, refin'd from passion's base alloy,
 Seem'd wrapt in visions of seraphic joy:

Thus

205 Thus fixt she stood, and breath'd her fervent pray'r,

He, with a look of love, and wild despair,

O'er her enamour'd hung in silent grief;

No tear burst forth to give his soul relief:

Then, when a sigh th' obstructed passage broke,

210 Fondly he press'd her hand, and gently spoke.

' Must I then leave thee? shall I never more

' Gaze on that face, that heav'nly form adore?

' And is it thus my fairest hopes are cross'd?

' My scenes of bliss, are thus the phantoms lost?

215 ' Oh, no! we cannot, must not, will not part!

' Come, let me clasp thee to my doating heart.

' Not look, my love,—'tis ARIMANT is near:

' Not speak---'tis ARIMANT's fond voice you hear!

" Go, go, vain man," at length TAMIRA said,

220 " For I am sentenc'd to another's bed.

" The clay-cold earth shall clasp me in her arms,

" The worm shall riot on these lifeless charms.

" Go,

" Go, go, vain man ; the Gods demands my breath,

" My King has pass'd the vow, and welcome death !"

225 ' Yet still,' the youth replied, ' yet still remains

' One gleam of hope, one med'cine for our pains :

' Let's instant wed ; that when the priest shall stand,

' And o'er thee raise his unrelenting hand ;

' Myself may snatch thee from the altar's side,

230 ' No more a virgin, but a lawful bride.

' The hour that fav'd his child thy fire will bless,

' And date from this sad day his future happiness !'

' No, I will die,' the royal maid replied,

' Leave me ; for sure my heart is sorely tried.----

235 ' Yet stay, and hear my last, my parting prayer,

' May'st thou be happy in another fair !

' When she ('twas once *my* wish) thy hours beguiles

' With sweet complacence, and obedient smiles,

' May'st thou transported read her beauties o'er,

240 ' And never think of poor TAMIRA more.'

But

But should I tell how much the lover said
 To woo his mistress to the bridal bed :
 Should I relate how oft he fondly swore,
 That he would live for her, or live no more :
 245 Or how TAMIRA, melting by degrees,
 Thought death more grim, as life began to please :
 All this would stretch the limits of my song,
 And well I wean my tale's already long.
 Suffice it then to say, the prince prevail'd,
 250 That passion conquer'd, that religion fail'd ;
 That the priest trembling spoke the blessing o'er,
 And join'd their hands, whose hearts were join'd before.
 Now ev'ning shades had chas'd the sun away,
 And silent gloom eclips'd the lamp of day—
 255 Thro' that still gloom the *Muse* nor pours her light,
 Nor prys into the mysteries of the night.
 She waits till morn from yonder hill arise
 To wake the verdant earth, and chear the skies.

Nor stops she now, to tell the long array
 260 Of priests, and nobles, dark'ning all the way;
 What hymns the virgins sung, what tears they shed,
 To weep the living princess, as the dead;
 But opes the sacred shrine with magic hands,
 Where at the altar's foot the destin'd victim stands.
 265 Veil'd in his robe, the monarch turns aside;
 Nor knows he yet TAMIRA is a bride.
 The lab'ring *Bramin* with extatic stare,
 His eyes all haggard, and erect his hair,
 Lifts o'er the *virgin's* neck his sacred knife;
 270 ' Spare her,' cries ARIMANT, ' O spare my wife,
 ' *Golconda's* injur'd Gods demand a *virgin life.*'
 But how shall I relate the wild surprize,
 And rage, that redden'd in *Yamodin's* eyes?
 As ere hoarse thunders rend the troubled sky,
 275 Ere lightning's forked darts begin to fly,

A gloomy

A gloomy silence reigns o'er all the air ;
 Yet horrors dark th' approaching storm declare :
 So silent long th' offended monarch stood,
 But on his brow was seen the gath'ring cloud :
 280 Silent he left the shrine.----Now, hapless bride,
 How dost thou with the nuptial knot untied !
 For on thyself no thought hast thou to spare,
 The gentle ARIMANT is all thy care.
 Prophetic are thy fears : for lo ! a band
 285 (Each bears a falchion glitt'ring in his hand,)
 Of trusty guards, at once unmov'd they cry,
 ' This hour must ARIMANT prepare to die !'
 Soon as TAMIRA heard the cruel sound,
 All pale she lay, and breathless on the ground.
 290 In vain did ARIMANT behold the fair
 In all the agonies of wild despair ;
 In vain he fondly call'd her name ; in vain
 Stretch'd forth his hand : fast bound with many a chain,

The unrelenting ministers of fate
 295 Convey'd him struggling to the prison gate.

Sudden TAMIRA wakes, I see her rise
 And round the temple throw her anxious eyes;
 Her eyes, that spoke the torture of her mind,
 And seem'd to miss what most they long'd to find.

300 ' Ah! poor TAMIRA, close those eyes again,
 ' Thy ARIMANT is gone; some cruel pain
 ' Shall rob thy faithful comfort of his life,
 ' Torn from th' embraces of his weeping wife."

But when awaking all that past she knew,
 305 Swift to the presence of her fire she flew:

He saw her come, but look'd aside, and frown'd;

He saw her kneel, nor rais'd her from the ground!

' Save him, O save my love,' the mourner said,

' Pour all thy vengeance on this wretched head!

310 ' I, only I, have sinn'd; my blood alone

' That guilt can expiate, which is all my own.

' Perhaps

- ‘ Perhaps the Gods may yet accept my life,
- ‘ *No spotless virgin, but a loyal wife.*
- ‘ When these poor weeping eyes shall sleep in peace,
- 315 ‘ Perhaps th’ insatiate pestilence may cease.
- ‘ If to your soul my mother’s name was dear,
- ‘ If e’er your daughter’s voice could charm your ear,
- ‘ If e’er affection’s tender ties could move,
- ‘ O kill TAMIRA ; but O save my love.’
- 320 To all her plaints no word the king replied,
- But wav’d his hand ; and thus again the bride.
- ‘ Since he must die, one only wish is mine ;
- ‘ Let the same urn our mingled dust enshrine.
- ‘ Fearless I’ll rush to clasp him in the fire,
- 325 ‘ And in his arms a faithful wife expire.
- ‘ Happy the dame of *Coromandel*’s coast !
- ‘ She never there laments a husband lost ;
- ‘ But with his ashes to one grave descends,
- ‘ Her faith applauded by surrounding friends :

- 330 ' O'er her, while yet alive, those friends prolong
' The festive dances, and triumphal song.
' Nor does *Golconda* to her brides deny
' With their lov'd lords in funeral pomp to lie.
' But ah! while others with their consorts sleep,
335 ' Why should the royal widow live, and weep?
' Full well I know, *Yamodin*, to survive
' A husband lost is our prerogative;
' Yet let me die; and dying let me prove
' That royal hearts are not ashamed to love.'
340 Silent the monarch stands, but nods assent;
Nor ev'n her instant death can make his heart relent.
 Now to young *ARIMANT* the muse returns;
Still hopeless *ARIMANT* in prison mourns.
Chain'd on the ground the prostrate warrior lies,
345 And with despair, and rage indignant cries;
' Thus does our king his loyal soldiers pay,
' Who toil'd for him in many a well-fought day?

' Have

- ' Have I for this so oft distain'd thy flood,
 ' O *Ganges*, sacred stream, with hostile blood?
 350 ' Did I for this *Bengala's* monarch wound,
 ' And cleave his hundred *Omrahs* to the ground?
 ' Alas! ere yet the swift-wing'd hour is o'er,
 ' Perception, memory, shall be no more!
 ' Ere yet an hour, this heart, of life the seat,
 355 ' Dry'd all its channels, shall forget to beat!
 ' Nor thou *TAMIRA*, whom the rites divine,
 ' Had tyrants mercy, made for ever mine,
 ' Nor thou *TAMIRA* shalt attend my doom
 ' And lay thy murder'd husband in the tomb."
 360 Scarce had he spoke, when fair *TAMIRA* came,
 And heard her *ARIMANT* repeat her name:
 ' Yes, yes, my *ARIMANT* I go,' she cries,
 ' To wait on all thy funeral obsequies;
 ' Yes, I will see thee fall, yet mark my love,
 365 ' Think not a tear *TAMIRA's* faith shall prove;

' Think

‘ Think not I’ll hang lamenting o’er thine urn

‘ And thence to life, and life’s vain joys return;

‘ No, ARIMANT, with thee I mean to die :

‘ What grants my father, will my love deny ?’

370. ‘ Oh! no,’ he cried (for now his gentle breast

A thousand tender thoughts at once possess’d,) Perce

‘ Oh! no, thou shalt not die! can’st thou sustain,

‘ Dear hapless nymph, the agonies of pain? 332

‘ Can those soft limbs endure the raging fire? Nor

375 ‘ Shall that sweet breath in one short hour expire ?’

All arts he tried, but all those arts were vain,

To call her wandering thoughts to life again.

But now the hour was come! the trusty band,

That seiz’d him first, his forfeit life demand.

380 ‘ O stay, ye cruel, stay,’ TAMIRA cries,

‘ Let me once more embrace him, ere he dies.

‘ And must he die!—Oh! no; again I’ll go,

‘ Again, (he will not still despise my woe,) 333

‘ Kneel

‘ Kneel at my father’s feet.---Stay, cruel, stay ;

385 ‘ Touch not my love before, while I’m away.’---

Thus she distracted. But the youth, who saw

How reason bow’d to love’s superior law,

Saw passion all her boasted strength controul,

With words of comfort calm’d her troubled soul.

390 Now, but my bark is hastening to the shore,

I’d count the croud, and tell the legions o’er,

That wait to see their best lov’d general’s fall,

Each sigh I’d number, and each groan recall :

But the sad pomp I pass in silence by.

395 Short was his parting prayer : to that, what eye

The tear of honest pity could deny ?

Then a few steps the gallant youth retir’d,

Bore the last stroke, and decently expir’d.

When now by certain proofs TAMIRA knew

400 That ARIMANT was dead ; away she flew,

D

Where

Where near a new-rai'd monumental pyre

Lay the lov'd object of her fond desire.

She saw his headless trunk all drench'd in blood,

And pausing o'er his yet-warm relicks stood.

405 But soon recov'ring, she began to pour

Fresh water o'er his limbs, and cleanse the clotted gore.

With her own hair she wip'd each stain away,

And kiss'd a thousand times th' unconscious clay.

'Haste, O ye ling'ring *Bramins*, haste,' she said;

410 Strait on the pyre his breathless corpse was laid.

There myrrh, and costly frankincense she threw,

Each fragrant herb that drinks the morning dew,

Sweet-smelling woods that od'rous gums exhale,

And spices, scented by th' *Arabian* gale.

415 Then to the pile a flaming torch applied,

Stretch'd out her naked arms, and wildly cried:

'I come, I come---what means that hollow groan?

'Nay, *ARIMANT*, you shall not lie alone.

'Chide

‘ Chide not, my love ; TAMIRA will not stay ;

420 ‘ We’ll mount together to the realms of day :

‘ Together to celestial climes we’ll soar,

‘ Where cruel fathers ne’er shall part us more.’

She said, and rushing to th’ impetuous fire,

Embrac’d her consort on the blazing pyre.

425 There, soon to dust consum’d, not long they lay ;

Part the rude winds bore unperceiv’d away :

One urn inclos’d the rest : resounding Fame

To earth’s remotest bounds convey’d their name.

Rest, faithful lovers, at each other’s side,

430 Whose lasting union death could ne’er divide.

O could the *Muse* shed odors on your tomb,

Sweet as the balms which *Eastern* vales perfume !

Sweet as the flowrets of a thousand dyes

That deck the ground, where * *Sigismonda* lies.

* Alluding to Dryden’s tale of *Sigismonda* and *Guiscardo*.

Yet,

435 Yet, friendly passenger, one boon I crave ;
 Pray you tread softly o'er their peaceful grave,
 By you, fond swains, a passing sigh be paid
 To gentle ARIMANT's unhappy shade.
 And ye, soft nymphs, whose sorrows oft o'erflow
 440 At the sad story of another's woe,
 Your kind concern let poor TAMIRA prove,
 And read with tend'rest tears, her tale of hapless love.

T H E E N D.

